

RURAL BLACKS' PERCEPTIONS
OF BASIC NEED FULFILMENT

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INTRODUCTION

In more recent times the basic needs approach to development has gained in popularity. It is without doubt that basic needs strategies have emerged as a response to the disillusionment with the poor track record of the more conventional development programmes. Basic needs aim at eliminating poverty and promoting the development of underprivileged areas. While the more conventional development approaches tend to focus more exclusively on economic growth, the basic needs strategy concentrates on people and their needs. At the same time the basic needs approach is also compatible with a number of other popular development concepts such as economic growth with equity, growth with poverty alleviation, and redistribution of resources with growth (cf Lisk, 1977; Streeten, 1977).

The basic needs strategy

In essence the basic needs strategy seeks to fulfil the most basic needs of the people in a relatively short period of time. This aim presents itself as a straightforward and simple one; therein lies the appeal of basic needs. The sense of urgency with which development hurdles are tackled also contributes to the popularity of the basic needs approach among practitioners and planners alike. The basic needs approach embraces the idea of tangible shorter-term development targets which upon achievement will pave the way for longer-term ones which should sustain the momentum of economic growth and social development.

However, simple characterizations of the basic needs approach may be deceptively misleading. There are a number of unresolved and contentious issues which should be mentioned in passing. Most definitions of basic needs make reference to these issues.

Keeton (1984: 279) maintains that 'no distinct theory or set of policies can be isolated and defined as the basic needs approach. Instead, the approach represents a broad outlook on development, which focuses on combatting poverty and raising the productivity of the poorest sections of the population'. Tollman (1984: 1) defines the basic needs approach to development more precisely as an economic programme which 'has as its aim the provision of a particular bundle of goods - basic needs (BN) goods - to the population lacking these; and as its intended outcome the eradication of absolute poverty, as measured by improvement in quantifiable indices

such as life-expectancy'. This brings us to the difficult question of how to define the contents of the basic needs 'bundle'.

The minimum bundle of goods referred to by Tollman typically includes adequate food, shelter and clothing, access to health and education services, and clean water and sanitation. By most standards these items are deemed essential and constitute core basic needs. The responsibility for providing basic needs goods and services is divided between the public and the private sector. The International Labour Organization also defines labour force participation as a basic need. Safety and job security, the opportunity to save for the future, provision for leisure needs, and political participation are other items which are variously thrown into the bundle for good measure. Some would also stipulate that participation in the definition of basic needs is a basic need in itself. This last viewpoint suggests that basic needs represent a basic human right.

A similarly contentious issue is the level of supply of basic goods which can be considered adequate. Criteria for determining these levels are variously based on objective expert opinion, the foresight of the authorities in charge, collective groups, or the individual consumers of these goods (Streeten, 1984; cf also Drewnowski, 1974).

Narrowly defined, then, the basic needs approach specifies the minimum bundle of goods and services which is required for a basic existence. Basic needs satisfaction is considered a necessary but not sufficient condition for economic development (Keeton, 1984: 292). The production and supply of basic needs goods may be seen to represent but a first step toward development. A broader view of the basic needs strategy would not consider basic needs satisfaction as an end in itself but merely as the instrument for developing human resources, ie as the condition for a full, long and healthy life (cf Streeten, 1984). Here, one detects the idea that the satisfaction of basic, predominantly physical needs, is also conducive to the achievement of higher-order life satisfaction.

A further distinction might be made between the more conservative and radical conceptions of basic needs. The more conservative approach proposes that basic needs satisfaction can be achieved within the existing socio-political structure, while the more radical school of thought requires the revision of the existing structural framework as a requisite to achieving basic needs.

The above issues are mentioned briefly because they have a bearing on the discussion to follow. In particular, we shall single out three points which are particularly pertinent.

Participation in the definition of basic needs

By and large the basic needs approach is synonymous with a grass-roots approach to development, in which the needs of individual households and communities are of paramount importance. Popular participation in development is the cornerstone of the basic needs approach. Popular participation might include the definition of

- basic needs items,
- reasonable levels of satisfaction of these basic needs items, and
- priorities within the more comprehensive bundle of basic needs.

As regards the definition of basic needs items, the core basic needs are thought to represent universal needs. However, regional variations may exist in the need for other essential items.

Basic needs is a dynamic concept: One can expect the minimally acceptable levels of consumption to shift over time. Therefore, the required level of basic need satisfaction must be subject to revision from time to time.

Priorities in basic needs may occur in those cases where resources will not permit the simultaneous production and supply of all basic needs. It should be noted, however, that trade-offs between core basic needs may be considered untenable precisely because these needs constitute the foundation of a decent human existence. However, communities might be invited to identify the priorities of the items to be supplied by the public sector.

The black rural population as a target group

If a basic needs development strategy is to be successful, it must be formulated in such a way as to ensure that the fruits of the development effort actually reach those who are in need and do so in a form that satisfies the need. This is the expert opinion put forward by Nattrass (1982: 3) who proposes that 'target' areas be isolated and 'target' groups which are exceptionally deprived be identified within these areas. In this connection Streeten (1984) prefers to speak of 'vulnerable' groups.

It is commonly agreed that one such target group, or group at risk is the rural sector of the population which has tended to be neglected by conventional development strategies. It is a known fact that a very significant proportion of the poor in South Africa comprises black families living in the rural areas, including the self-governing 'homelands' and the independent states.¹ Therefore, it is argued (cf Tollman, 1984; Ligthelm and Coetzee, 1984) that a basic needs strategy for the rural areas is required to offset the urban bias of conventional development programmes.

This paper focuses on the basic needs satisfaction of rural blacks of South Africa and aims to compare their situation with that of their counterparts in the city. The rationale for comparing rural and urban blacks is as follows: It is a commonly held assumption that population pressure and exhausted rural resources have had a detrimental effect on the basic need fulfilment of South Africa's rural population. Indeed, large numbers of rural people flock to the cities in order to seek a basic existence and also to satisfy their rising expectations. Many others are prevented from migrating by influx control restrictions. It should therefore appear that rural blacks use the city as a comparative frame of reference when reviewing their opportunities for satisfying their basic needs. It also seems

¹ This broad definition of South Africa is used throughout this paper.

reasonable to make relative comparisons between these two poles of need provision for analytical purposes.

The evaluation of basic needs

All development policies and programmes must be subject to evaluation in order to determine whether they are shaping according to expectations and will stand the test of time. Regular reviews of development trends are essential if the planners are to detect the telltale signs of progress in the right direction or the errors which need correction before irreparable damage is caused. Basic needs development programmes are no exception. It is essential that the point of departure in basic needs planning be recorded and subsequent changes monitored at regular intervals in order to chart achievements in relation to development inputs.

This brings us to the thorny issue of measurement. A number of questions spring to mind here: Firstly, at which level should basic need fulfilment be measured: at the community, regional or national level? Consistent with the grass-roots conception of basic needs one might propose that basic need priorities be determined within the local community context. This implies that community participation is required to obtain valid measures of basic needs. If we apply this idea in the rural areas, one might stipulate that it is the household which is the unit of consumption and also production of basic goods and services. Therefore, it stands to reason that the household is defined as the unit of analysis. Schemes for measuring household basic needs have been devised by Radwan and Alfthan (1978) and adapted for South African conditions by Robinson (1980). Robinson's scheme measures the extent to which the rural household has access to the various goods and services in the basic needs bundle and also probes into the obstacles which prevent the satisfaction of these needs. Studies of this type tend to yield extremely accurate and sensitive assessments of basic needs in rural communities.

Case studies of communities are ideally suited to an in-depth inquiry into local basic need satisfaction, however, they do not lend themselves to comparative studies. If one ventures beyond the confines of community boundaries, data collection for the evaluation of basic needs satisfaction presents a real challenge. Simkins (1984: 182) wryly observes: 'Researchers are obliged to cobble data together from a number of sources whose methods are not identical and which taken together do not provide complete coverage of the country'. In a similar vein Nattrass (1982: 9) proposes that data collection is an area in which 'there needs to be a great deal of innovation'. At the same time Nattrass (1982: 9) insists that the success of a basic needs approach is dependent on a continuing flow of reliable and relevant information.

It is true that a broad evaluation of basic need achievement in South Africa can be gained from conventional measures of development, such as life expectancy or infant mortality. These statistics are available at the national and regional levels. However, these statistics assess only the longer-term effects, the outcomes of basic need achievement; they do not tell us much about the effectiveness of the programme as such, that is if we are supplying target groups with the basic goods and services which, one presumes, will eventually effect the outcome indicated by, say, reduced infant mortality.

As an aside, the evaluation in terms of impact or outcome rather than process may go a long way toward testing the overall success of the basic needs strategy. By all standards, success can be attributed to a development programme which attacks the causes of poverty and underdevelopment rather than merely alleviating the symptoms. Nevertheless, the initial evaluation of a basic needs strategy may require data which indicates that the programme is working well until such time as the programme has a real impact on standards of living.

A STUDY OF QUALITY OF LIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA AND BASIC NEEDS

With a view to compiling just such a data base, the Centre for Applied Social Sciences at the University of Natal in conjunction with the Human Sciences Research Council undertook a nationwide study of quality of life in 1983. The rationale of the study was that if the basic needs approach were to be applied on a broader basis in South Africa, a larger-scale assessment would be required of basic need priorities, of current access to essential goods and services, and it would be essential to identify groups and areas which were severely deprived in terms of basic needs.

Methodological considerations

A comprehensive outline of the rationale underlying the quality of life study is given elsewhere (Møller and Schlemmer, 1983) and will not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that quality of life for purposes of this study was defined very broadly to embrace subjective reactions to one's day-to-day existence and perceptions of future life circumstances, indicators of mood and morale, and the personal assessment of basic need fulfilment. The composite set of indicators of subjective reaction to day-to-day existence were derived from qualitative exploratory research undertaken in black, Indian and white communities in and around Durban and on the Witwatersrand (Møller et al, 1978; BBDO Research (Pty) Ltd, 1976) which preceded the study and served as a basis for the inquiry. Mood and morale indices were based on Bradburn's (1969) affect-balance scale and adapted for local application.

The basic needs items were defined in terms of the more comprehensive bundle and included items pertaining to the satisfaction of needs such as nutrition, clothing, housing, sanitation and health services, education, saving capability, access to employment, material consumption needs, household utilities, safety, transport, and opportunities for leisure and recreation. Assessments of needs satisfaction were made in terms of the household, or where appropriate, of the individual level of consumption of goods and services.

The preliminary analysis of basic need satisfaction is mainly concerned with describing the differential levels of consumption of goods and services among black people in various living circumstances. In a next stage the level of basic need satisfaction is also related to quality of life in the sense of subjective well-being. Only preliminary results can be discussed here because the full analysis requires the application of multivariate techniques to the survey data which is presently being undertaken. It is obvious that the statistical relationships of basic needs with subjective quality of life which will be of focal consideration

here cannot be assigned the weight of causality. More advanced statistical analysis, such as path analysis, must be applied to unravel the complexities of causality. Therefore, the present discussion serves mainly to highlight the aspects of basic needs which may need immediate attention within the framework of a basic needs strategy. At this stage the findings are mainly descriptive and suggestive and no pretension is made of an exhaustive discussion.

The sample

An interview schedule was prepared by a working committee of researchers in close consultation with members of the community and administered to a national sample of whites, Indians, coloured people, and blacks living in the urban and rural areas of South Africa. In all, over 5 500 personal interviews were obtained. In this paper we shall be concerned only with the black subsample which was stratified into five major groups:

- Urban township blacks: 1516 blacks living in Soweto and townships in the Bloemfontein, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Durban areas and in towns in the Eastern Transvaal and KwaZulu.
- Peri-urban (shack) blacks (N=110) living in shack areas to the north and the south of Durban.
- Blacks living in the rural areas: This category comprises roughly equal numbers of persons residing in the remoter country districts in traditional, planned, and resettlement areas and on mission land in KwaZulu and Lebowa. A total of 436 interviews was obtained in this category.
- A special category of rural blacks consists of persons living and working on white farms in the Pietersburg district and Natal (N=299).
- The subsample of hostel blacks in the greater metropolitan area of Durban is omitted from the discussion here.

This report will give a descriptive account of the basic-need and quality-of-life situation of the two rural-based categories of blacks: the rural and white farm blacks. Along the lines of the argument presented above we shall use the township blacks as the main control group. Data pertaining to the peri-urban category which comprises only a small number of cases, is given only for completeness sake.¹

For the sake of convenience, references in the tables are made to the survey categories under the headings: rural, white farm, township, and shack(s) (-dwelling) blacks.

¹ The situation of peri-urban blacks is an extremely complex one. Their status position is ambiguous unlike the urban and rural people whose status positions are more clearly defined in the South African social structure. Therefore, it is difficult to give a valid interpretation of comparisons between the peri-urban and the other categories in the study.

FINDINGS

Absolute levels of basic need satisfaction

Respondents in the survey were questioned about the satisfaction of their day-to-day needs. Depending upon the issue in question the respondents acted as spokespersons for themselves or the entire household of which they were members. Questions were asked in such a way that the responses elicited could be considered objective assessments of basic need fulfilment if answered reasonably accurately.

The responses obtained are set out in some detail in Table A in the Appendix. The figures in the table speak for themselves, but some general comments may be useful. We shall commence with a discussion of the items in the needs bundle.

1. Rural resources: core basic needs

According to the ideal conception rural living is healthy and simple, and also free from the stresses usually associated with urban living. Basic needs such as food, water, fuel, and materials for housing etc are in plentiful supply and free of charge. Country people can walk to places and therefore have no need for transport. Theoretically, these advantages of country life should more than compensate for the lack of modern conveniences and comforts, and the generally lower standard of living available to most rural folk.

However, it is commonly known that the basic ingredients of rural living have been severely depleted by population pressure, among other factors. This is clearly reflected in the survey results. To give some examples:

- Substantially higher proportions of rural and white farm blacks than township and shack dwellers consumed protein foods and fruit and vegetables less often than once a week. Of course, dietary habits may vary markedly according to personal preferences, traditions, and the seasonal availability of foodstuffs, but the figures in Table A relating to levels of nutritional intake are cause for concern.
- Over four-fifths of rural and white farm blacks stated they use wood for cooking or heating in their homes (townships 38 per cent/26 per cent, shacks 30 per cent/26 per cent). However, less than 45 per cent of the rural blacks (shacks 62 per cent) collect their wood nearby. Forty-five per cent of rural blacks must buy firewood and a further 10 per cent must walk over 30 minutes to collect firewood. In this respect white farm blacks are more privileged in that 90 per cent can forage for wood close by. Thirty per cent of rural and white farm blacks use dung for cooking and heating. Most likely this is an indication that other more suitable fuel types are not available. Furthermore, ecologists might argue that dung should not be burnt, but be recycled as fertilizer to increase food production.
- Water may still be free of charge in the rural areas; less than 10 per cent of the rural blacks in the survey had access to piped water. On the other hand, just under 60 per cent in the rural black category had to walk over 15 minutes, that is more than 1 kilometre, to fetch their

water. Access to water is easier for white farm households. However, even here almost four out of 10 households must fetch water over one kilometre away.

- As far as housing is concerned rural households are privileged in terms of dwelling space. By contrast, white farm workers live in cramped conditions. Thirty-one per cent of white farm households occupy a single room. It is remarkable that comparatively fewer shack households (24 per cent) live in such restricted circumstances.
- One would not expect rural houses to be connected to a city-type sewer system. However, even in rural areas appropriate sanitary measures will be required when densities reach certain levels. Therefore, the fact that almost one of every two white farm households uses the bush toilet may be unacceptable from a health as well as a humanitarian point of view.

2. Clothing

Roughly equal proportions of respondents in all categories had not acquired new items of clothing in the past year. The white farm people again seem to be substantially underprivileged with regard to clothing. It is interesting to note that the shack people clothe themselves with second-hand articles to a greater extent than others. This is perhaps a reflection of the flourishing informal rag trade in the peri-urban areas.

3. Distribution of health and education services

It might be expected that basic needs such as education and health may be more difficult to supply to the rural than the urban areas owing to the lower population concentrations.

The survey revealed that the majority of rural and white farm blacks tend to rely on public transport to go to the nearest health clinic or hospital. In this respect the rural categories of blacks did not differ markedly from their urban counterparts. However, substantially higher proportions of the rural (27 per cent) and white farm (397 per cent) than the township (nine per cent) or shack (19 per cent) households stated they required an hour or more to get to their destination.

Furthermore, some 13 per cent of the rural respondents indicate that health services were only available to them on a weekly basis or less often.

In the vast majority of cases the schoolchildren in the surveyed households were able to walk to school. Relatively small proportions of schoolchildren had to travel over an hour to reach school. In this respect the white farm children (18 per cent) and the shack children (15 per cent) were more disadvantaged than the rural (10 per cent) and the township children (three per cent).

It would appear that distance to schools is not the major obstacle which prevents access to education. However, almost one in five rural households and two in 10 white farm households had children of school-going age who were not attending school. The comparative figure for township households was much lower than eight per cent.

Major reasons for children not attending school in the rural and white farm areas were financial constraints, followed by the need to keep children out of school to mind the cattle. Poor health was also cited relatively often by respondents in the rural category.

4. Income and material standard of living

Table 1 shows that the rural and white farm households do not enjoy the same standard of living as their urban counterparts in terms of consumer durables. Substantially lower proportions of the rural (26 per cent) and white farm (20 per cent) than the township (47 per cent) households have entered into hire purchase agreements. Only 23 per cent of the rural and 16 per cent of the white farm households but 35 per cent of the township respondents were able to make savings in the year of the survey. It is noteworthy that the rural categories enjoyed a substantially lower material standard of living despite the fact that the vast majority lived rent-free.

The per-capita incomes (1983) calculated on the basis of the survey data reflect the differential standards of living: Rural (R25 p m), white farm (R12 p m), township (R52 p m), shacks (R45 p m).

It is noteworthy that in terms of material consumer needs the peri-urban shack dwellers do not appear to be much better off than their rural-based counterparts. However, this belies their average earning power which compares relatively favourably to that of township dwellers. White farm households fare worst of all as regards income and material standard of living.

5. Employment

All survey categories indicated problems in obtaining employment for all their members. With the exception of the white farm households whose unemployed members could presumably be absorbed into the farm labour force, albeit for low rates of pay, some 20 per cent of rural, urban, and peri-urban households sheltered unemployed men. The rate of unemployment for women (11 to 17 per cent) appeared to be similar in the rural and urban categories. Surprisingly, women in the shack areas seemed to have fewer employment problems.

6. Transport

According to survey results rural and white farm people are less reliant on public transport than their urban or peri-urban counterparts for regular commuting and therefore incur lower travel expenditure. It is also true that travel to and from work may be less stressful and time-consuming for rural and white farm workers than for urban and peri-urban workers, in particular. On the other hand the lack of household conveniences and utilities in the rural areas requires considerable time on the part of the rural housewife as mentioned earlier.

7. Leisure

Leisure time: All categories of workers spent a similar number of hours on the job, with the exception of the white farm workers. White farm labourers worked a median of 54 hours a week compared with some 40-45 hours in the other categories. Almost 14 per cent of the white farm workers compared with only some three to six per cent in the other categories worked a 60 hour week or more.

Leisure activities: As might be expected the pattern of leisure activities is markedly different in town and country. These differences may be a reflection of preference as well as opportunity. In this connection it is noteworthy that substantially lower proportions of the white farm than other respondents attended religious services.

Differential need satisfaction: groups 'at risk'

We have seen that the idealized image of rural life does not hold true, at least for the rural-based households in the survey. The core basic needs of substantial proportions of rural and white farm blacks are not adequately met, as shown in Table A. In particular, the white farm households appear, with few exceptions, to be consistently underprivileged as regards all the items in the basic needs bundle.

As an aside, the satisfaction of the basic needs of the shack dwellers is not markedly superior to that of the rural-based people in the survey, and it certainly pales beside that of the township people. It is perhaps telling that according to earlier research conducted by the Centre for Applied Social Sciences (Møller and Schlemmer, 1980) the negative image of shack areas is similar to that of rural areas in the sense that rural areas lack modern conveniences and facilities. In other words these areas cannot satisfy the basic needs of their inhabitants to a sufficiently high standard. If we were to identify the categories 'at risk' according to type of need on the basis of the indicators employed in the survey, the following pattern of differential need satisfaction emerges as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Basic need fulfilment by type of need and area

x denotes inadequate need fulfilment

	<u>Rural</u>	<u>White farm</u>	<u>Township</u>	<u>Shacks</u>
Nutrition	x	xx		
Clothing		x		
Housing		x		x
Water	x			x
Sanitation		x		x
Fuel	xx	x		
Health	x	x		
Education	x	xx		x
Savings	x	xx		x
Transport to work				x
Unemployment	x	?	x	x
Leisure time		x		

One interpretation of Table 1 is that target groups for a basic needs strategy are in rough order: white farm communities, other rural communities, and peri-urban shack areas.

Subjective perceptions of basic needs

We have briefly outlined what might be called the objective assessment of the basic needs situation of rural-based people and compared it with that of people living in urban and peri-urban conditions. Let us now turn to the rural people's subjective evaluation of their living circumstances.

Three probes into the general reaction of people to their life situations were undertaken in the study: Reactions were measured in terms of the indicators: overall life satisfaction, happiness, and happiness with life in South Africa. This last item had a mildly political connotation. The results are given in Table 2 for the survey categories.

The results in Table 2 suggest that levels of well-being or general life satisfaction are moderately high for all black groups. However, only in those categories where substantial proportions of the population do not have access to basic goods and services, do majorities indicate dissatisfaction with their overall life situation. Thus, majorities of the white farm people indicated dissatisfaction on two counts, and the rural people on one count. By contrast, township people's reactions to their life circumstances were decidedly less negative. The shack people gave a mixed response and fell somewhere between the rural and urban groups.

Table 2. Indicators of well-being by area

	Percentage dissatisfied			
	Rural	White farm	Township	Shacks
	%	%	%	%
General life satisfaction ¹⁾	53	61	47	58
Personal happiness ²⁾	43	47	40	33
Life for blacks in South Africa ³⁾	48	56	43	44

1) Item in interview schedule: 'Taking all things together, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days. On the whole would you say you are very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?'

2) Item in interview schedule: 'Taking all things together in your life, how would you say things are these days? Would you say you are very happy, fairly happy, fairly unhappy, or very unhappy these days?'

3) Item in interview schedule: 'Here are some statements about how black people like you could feel about life for blacks in South Africa. Which statement shows how you feel about life in South Africa? - very happy/fairly happy but not very happy/unhappy/angry and impatient.'

It is interesting to note that levels of happiness are generally higher for all categories of black people. This trend meets expectations and is also consistent with the results of earlier research undertaken by the Centre. The happiness indicator seems to trap a dimension of well-being which focuses on people's personal lives. It has been discovered that aspects of people's personal lives have a strong and immediate impact on people's subjective perceptions of well-being. For example, relationships between personal dimensions of well-being and overall life satisfaction tend to be strong and for the most part positive. Positive, most likely because people are quite capable of making the necessary adjustments to improve personal aspects of their lives. This is not to say that they may be very unhappy until the appropriate solutions are found and their happiness self-rating 'bounces' back to its normal level. By contrast, control over externalities may be more difficult to achieve and any negative influence on a person's well-being may be far more difficult to remove. Therefore, such negative effects may be longer-lasting. At the same time, if improvements to externalities are effected they may have a lesser influence on personal well-being than improvements to the very personal dimensions of life.

These findings have important implications for a basic needs assessment. Basic needs may appropriately be defined as external factors. Therefore, we would expect them to have a stronger influence on the two overall life satisfaction measures ('life satisfaction', 'life for blacks in South Africa') which appeal more to a rational, cognitive assessment of one's life situation, and to evoke a less dramatic reaction in terms of the more affective 'happiness' indicator of well-being.

In an earlier report on the quality of life in South Africa (based on the same survey reported on here), the supposition was made that the effects of poor external life conditions were somewhat 'softened' or cushioned by higher levels of income. Higher incomes allowed the more affluent blacks to rise above the constraints of their respective life situation in the rural, urban and peri-urban areas. Evidence was supplied which confirmed this proposition (Møller et al, 1984).

Seen from a slightly different perspective one might propose that basic needs underachievement, unless it drops to absolutely intolerable levels, will have a generally negative effect on overall life satisfaction. Personal factors such as personal and family relationships can somewhat compensate for the lack of basic need fulfilment, unless they in turn are affected by externalities. There is a grave danger of this happening:

- when the level of a basic needs drops to objectively or subjectively intolerable levels, eg nutritional intake reaches the starvation point;
- when a large number of basic need items in the bundle are inadequately met. This causes basic deprivations to have a cumulative effect; and
- when basic need deprivations interfere with the functioning of satisfying personal aspects of life. For example if cramped dwelling space impinges on otherwise satisfactory family relationships.

Under such conditions one might expect mood and morale, that is a more emotional or affective assessment of one's life situation to suffer. The cushioning effect of personal satisfiers cannot be expected to function any longer.

There are signs that the three situations outlined above may obtain in the target areas and target groups identified in the study. The white farm people would most certainly figure as a target group for a basic need strategy.

Table 3 shows that the mood of substantial minorities of white farm and rural people are bleak. Thirty-seven to 46 per cent described their lives as miserable, dull, insecure, and frustrating. The white farm people seemed to be especially demoralized. Townfolk, who might be expected to lead a more stressful life and to be more aware of their relatively deprived situation in South African society, did not express such negative reactions. Less than one-third gave a negative description of their life circumstances. Shack people on the other hand, whose basic needs are in jeopardy, responded similarly to the rural and white farm people.

Table 3. Mood and morale in everyday life

	<u>Rural</u> %	<u>White farm</u> %	<u>town- ship</u> %	<u>Shacks</u> %
Life is:				
Miserable (vs happy)	38	46	32	35
Dull (vs fun)	42	44	30	36
Insecure (vs secure)	38	37	31	46
Frustrating (vs rewarding)	46	43	32	45
Dissatisfied with spare time activities	19	36	16	25
Dissatisfied with the fun you get out of life	28	32	25	27

Although there are no majorities of negative mood indicated by the rural categories, one can nevertheless imagine that even this level of demoralization among rural-based and shack people can become problematic if it affects the manner in which people are able to cope with life within the constraints of their basic need situation. Demoralized people will not find the strength to mobilize resources to improve their lot, ie break out of the poverty cycle.

Basic need priorities

Moving from the more general to the more specific indicators of life satisfaction, let us review the reactions to various aspects of day-to-day existence.

At the beginning of the interview session respondents were asked to spontaneously name the issues which influenced their lives in positive and negative fashion. The responses are set out in Table 4. As might be expected the respondents indicated that the more personal and intangible type of issue tended to make the greatest contribution to their quality of life. On the other hand unfulfilled existential needs figured largely in the lists of 'worst things in life'.

Table 4. The best and worst parts of life*

<u>Best Part</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Worst Part</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>Rural blacks</u>			
Family relationships	25	Financial situation	24
Children's progress	23	Unemployment	15
Religious life	18	Family health	14
Marriage, love life	14	Drought	11
<u>White farm blacks</u>			
Family relationships	27	Financial situation	37
Children's progress	18	Death of friends, relatives	22
Job security	17	Unsatisfactory work	12
Marriage, love life	13	Personal relationships	11
Religious life	12	Transport problems	10
Financial independence	10		
<u>Township blacks</u>			
Family relationships	28	Financial situation	40
Religious life	20	Family health	12
Children's progress	17	Personal relationships	11
Job security	14	Housing	10
Financial independence	13	Unemployment	10
Leisure activities	12		
<u>Shack dwellers</u>			
Children's progress	27	Financial situation	17
Family relationships	25	Unemployment	15
Religious life	17	Housing	10
Financial independence	14	Alcohol abuse, drugs	9
Job security	13		
Marriage, love life	13		
*The item in the survey read:			
'Think of your life - all parts of it. Which <u>two</u> parts of your life are best - the two parts which make you feel most happy or satisfied?			
Which two parts of your life are worst - the two parts which make you feel most unhappy or dissatisfied?'			

In another exercise the respondents in the survey were asked to give satisfaction ratings of a number of items relating to specific aspects or parts of their lives. If we elect only those items which refer to the basic needs items specified earlier, a picture of deprivation emerges as in Table 5.

It is striking that the pattern of subjective evaluations of basic needs in Table 5 matches the objective assessment discussed earlier (cf Table A in Appendix and Table 1). As a rule higher proportions of rural and white farm than township people express dissatisfaction with their basic needs situation.

Table 5. Specific satisfaction indicators

Percentage dissatisfied with aspects of life				
	Rural	White farm	Township	Shacks
	%	%	%	%
<u>Nutrition</u>				
The food you eat	44	54	30	45
Food prices	91	89	88	94
<u>Housing</u>				
Your dwelling here	19	42	37	55
The size of your house	35	48	63	64
The housing available for people like you	38	49	62	66
The rent you pay	30	32	66	53
<u>Water</u>				
Water for your daily needs	61	43	28	76
<u>Health, education, and community services</u>				
Health and medical services	36	42	30	42
The distance of shops, schools, transport and other services	34	64	28	43
Government services in your community	68	64	52	75
The costs of education for yourself and your family	58	59	58	71
<u>Transport</u>				
The roads in your neighbourhood	67	46	63	85
The transport you use most	52	53	51	59
Your transport costs	75	71	77	91
<u>Employment</u>				
Opportunities for finding work	81	69	72	91
Your job security	31	44	32	37
<u>Savings and social security</u>				
Your family's income if you are sick or die	69	72	62	67
Your income when you are old	63	65	58	80
<u>Income and material standard of living</u>				
The way you are able to provide for your family	51	62	44	59
Your wages	60	79	71	70
Your personal possessions - things you have been able to buy	48	65	45	61

There are some notable exceptions: Dissatisfaction with income and expenditure issues tends to be shared by all groups. Even so, white farm blacks as a group are most dissatisfied with their wages, which are on average the lowest. Housing is mainly a cause for dissatisfaction in the urban and the peri-urban areas (cf also Table 4). Again the subjective evaluation corresponds to the objective circumstances described above. Transport and employment tend to be areas which are considered problematic by all groups. To complete the picture, one can state that the pattern of dissatisfaction with basic needs achievement in shack areas is very similar to that of the country areas.

While this pattern of greater dissatisfaction in the rural and white farm areas than in town meets expectations based on the objective needs assessment, it is nevertheless remarkable. Consider, for example, that expectations and aspirations of a higher standard of living are likely to be far higher in town than in the country. Nevertheless the townspeople as a whole tend to be far more satisfied with their life circumstances than the country folk, at least as far as their basic needs are concerned. There is very little evidence of the type of satisfaction born of low expectations among the rural and white farm blacks. This suggests that these rural categories would be receptive 'target' groups for a basic needs strategy.

If we interpret the results shown in Tables 4 and 5 in terms of priority of need among rural based blacks, it would also appear that employment is a top priority, followed by water for rural blacks, and access to services for both groups. Nutrition among white farm workers is another area which requires attention. Unfortunately, there is no data concerning perceptions of the satisfaction of clothing and fuel needs.

The survey findings reviewed so far have been suggestive that dissatisfaction of a specific and more general nature is associated with an inadequate existential base. Of course this does not necessarily mean that conversely increasing the level of basic needs provision automatically improves people's perception of their quality of life. There are, however, indications that this is the case. An earlier analysis of the survey data pertaining to the urban and rural black categories revealed that higher income earners in each respective category expressed higher satisfactions with their lives in general as well as with specific aspects of their lives (Møller et al, 1984). The close association between selected basic need items and well-being depicted in Table 6 is also suggestive of the positive impact of a basic needs strategy on the quality of life. There is reason to assume that among underprivileged groups a small improvement in the provision of core needs would have a relatively greater influence on well-being than among the more privileged.¹ That is, a strategy aimed at providing for basic needs would be more cost-effective in terms of the quality of life of this type of target group.

¹ On the basis of past research experience one can say that as a rule, no statistical relationship exists between saturated needs and overall life satisfaction.

Table 6. Relationship between specific need satisfactions and overall life satisfaction

Kendall's Tau values are given for correlations which are statistically significant at the 0,001 level. A dash indicates that the correlation is not statistically significant at this level.				
	Rural	White farm	Township	Shacks*
<u>Nutrition</u>				
The food you eat	0,31	0,20	0,39	0,47
Food prices	0,21	0,11	0,29	-
<u>Housing</u>				
Your dwelling here	0,20	0,10	0,18	0,31
The size of your house	-	0,09	0,18	0,17
The privacy in your house	0,20	0,14	0,25	0,17
The rent you pay	-	-	0,13	-
The housing available for people like you	0,12	-	0,12	0,16
<u>Water</u>				
Water for your daily needs	0,25	0,32	-	-
<u>Services</u>				
Health and medical services	0,18	0,22	0,14	-
The distance of shops, schools, transport and other services	0,22	0,21	-	-
Government services in your community	0,15	-	0,13	-
Police services in your neighbourhood	0,13	-	0,08	-
The costs of education for yourself or family	0,27	0,20	0,13	0,29
<u>Transport</u>				
The roads in your neighbourhood	-	-	-	-
The transport you use most	-	-	0,05	0,20
Your transport costs	-	-	0,07	-
<u>Employment</u>				
Opportunities for finding work	0,35	0,38	0,14	0,21
Your job security	0,25	0,33	0,10	0,22
<u>Income</u>				
Your wages	0,19	0,29	0,18	-
The way you are able to provide for your family	0,35	0,38	0,21	0,31
<u>Savings and security</u>				
Your family's income if you are sick or die	-	0,24	0,11	0,30
Your income when you are old	0,24	0,32	0,09	-
<u>Material consumption</u>				
Your personal possessions	0,24	0,22	0,12	0,22
(N)	(436)	(299)	(1516)	(110)

* Correlations significant at the 0,05 level.

CONCLUSIONS AND ASSESSMENT

The most general conclusion which can be drawn from this preliminary analysis of the survey findings is that majorities of the South African rural black population feel that their basic subsistence needs are inadequately provided for. This conclusion states the obvious and may therefore sound trivial. However, it must be emphasized that this study gives a very careful examination of its subject of inquiry based on fairly comprehensive data covering the many sectors which make up the South African population. By virtue of the nature of the study, one of its most important functions is precisely to substantiate or negate popular conceptions. Furthermore, as mentioned in the foregoing discussion, policy-making circles need to be informed that rural poverty is not only a statistical fact, but also has a presence in people's minds.

Therefore, the results of the study are all the more remarkable in that they reveal how painfully aware are the underprivileged rural groups of their predicament. This is especially noteworthy because rural blacks are not considered to be particularly militant in their demand for their share of public goods and services. In this connection, it is noteworthy that the white farm people show a keen perception of the violations of their basic needs.

The survey results are also indicative of the frustration and malaise of the rural folk who seem to be unable to break out of the vicious circle of their need deprivation. By their own admission lack of employment opportunities and low incomes constitute the poverty trap in which they are caught up.

Some conclusions regarding the research methods are worth mentioning:

The indicators employed in the study appeared to be extremely sensitive in identifying groups at risk, such as the white farm people, and particular areas of felt deprivation, for example, lack of employment opportunities.

Particularly striking is the degree of correspondence between the respondents' assessment of their basic needs situation and their perceptions of privilege and deprivation. This result is most certainly a good reflection of the face-validity or content-validity of the research instrument.

We are mindful that the statistical relationships between need satisfaction and overall well-being cannot be interpreted as causal ones because we do not know if the requisite assumptions are met. Further multivariate analysis has still to be undertaken. Nevertheless, the results of the correlation exercise shown in Table 6 are suggestive that improved levels of living can make real contributions to the quality of life of rural South Africans. The emphasis is squarely on the rural people. The reason for this is as follows.

In presenting the findings of the study an analytic distinction was made between two poles, the urban and the rural. The comparison of rural and urban needs achievement revealed that urban people generally felt that their basic needs were better provided for than the rural people. (It is of little importance for this argument that the provision of housing needs

was considered a peculiar urban problem). In fact, the survey results seemed to indicate that most core basic needs of townspeople are reasonably adequately met or 'saturated' in the sense that increasing the level of provision would not effect a corresponding increase in their quality of life. Conversely, the conclusion is reached that the impact of a basic needs strategy in the rural areas would optimally improve the well-being of rural blacks, whose basic needs are to a large extent unfulfilled.

Although this paper focuses on the rural rather than the peri-urban blacks, it must be mentioned in passing that the survey evidence also indicates a pressing need for the improvement and upgrading of basic services in the peri-urban shack settlements.

One can only hope that an appropriate basic needs strategy is devised and carried out in the near future for the benefit of rural (and peri-urban) blacks. The research into the quality of life of South Africans reported on in this paper might usefully serve as a baseline with which to evaluate the progress achieved in such a development programme.

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APPENDIX

Table A. Basic need indicators by area

N=Rural (1516), White farm (436), Township (299), Shacks (110)
Unless otherwise indicated rows add up to 100 per cent

NUTRITION			
During the past month have eaten/drunk:	Daily	Once/twice	Less
	%	per week	often
		%	%
<u>Meat, poultry, fish</u>			
Rural	14	78	8
White farm	12	75	13
Township	35	62	3
Shacks	29	69	2
<u>Dried beans or peas</u>			
Rural	11	66	23
White farm	6	52	42
Township	10	67	23
Shacks	18	77	5
<u>Eggs</u>			
Rural	23	56	21
White farm	22	54	24
Township	46	44	10
Shacks	39	55	6
<u>Fruit</u>			
Rural	15	60	25
White farm	9	56	35
Township	44	46	10
Shacks	20	73	7
<u>Vegetables</u>			
Rural	48	41	11
White farm	38	38	24
Township	43	51	6
Shacks	44	52	4
<u>Desserts, sweet biscuits or cakes</u>			
Rural	6	35	59
White farm	5	24	71
Township	10	55	35
Shacks	2	46	52
<u>Beer, wine, spirits</u>			
Rural	1	18	81
White farm	0	22	78
Township	5	25	70
Shacks	2	19	79
<u>Tshwala</u>			
Rural	4	7	89
White farm	3	21	76
Township	2	5	93
Shacks	2	14	84

Table A continued

CLOTHING						
Items purchased or obtained for self during the past year (exclusive clothes worn solely for work)						
	0 %	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 or more %
<u>Trousers/skirt/frock or equivalent (new)</u>						
Rural	33	20	19	11	7	10
White farm	42	22	16	7	7	6
Township	30	19	21	12	8	10
Shacks	34	30	17	6	4	9
<u>Trousers/skirt/frock or equivalent (second-hand)</u>						
Rural	74	9	13	1	1	2
White farm	74	9	10	3	2	2
Township	77	8	7	3	2	3
Shacks	60	17	6	6	4	7
<u>Jacket/coat (new)</u>						
Rural	60	24	11	3	1	1
White farm	71	17	9	3	0	0
Township	60	25	11	3	1	0
Shacks	55	27	8	3	3	4
<u>Jacket/coat (second-hand)</u>						
Rural	80	12	5	2	1	0
White farm	84	10	2	2	1	1
Township	87	8	3	0	1	1
Shacks	69	10	12	0	3	6
<u>Shoes (new)</u>						
Rural	36	32	21	6	4	1
White farm	46	30	15	4	3	2
Township	29	33	23	9	3	3
Shacks	38	32	19	4	1	6
<u>Shoes (second-hand)</u>						
Rural	76	14	6	2	1	1
White farm	77	14	6	2	0	1
Township	83	10	4	1	1	1
Shacks	67	20	8	1	0	4

Table A continued

HOUSING

Number of rooms occupied by respondent's household
(including kitchen, but excluding bathroom)

		$\frac{1}{n}$	2	3	4	5 or more
		%	%	%	%	%
Rural	(7)*	7	11	22	22	38
White farm	(6)	31	18	15	18	18
Township	(6)	4	6	12	62	16
Shacks	(6)	24	14	13	27	22

*Median number people in household

Water supply to dwelling

	Rural	White farm	Township	Shacks
Piped water inside dwelling	5	3	34	1
Piped water on stand	5	21	48	3
Water nearby	31	37	15	39
Water more than 15 minutes walk away	59	39	3	57
	100	100	100	100

SANITATION

Type of toilet used at residence

	Flush inside	Flush outside	Pit/bucket latrine	Bush/veld
	%	%	%	%
Rural	3	3	79	15
White farm	1	15	35	49
Township	26	51	23	0
Shacks	0	0	90	10

Toilet is shared with other households

	%
Rural	7
White farm	38
Township	19
Shacks	33

Table A continued

FUEL				
Percentages using different types of fuel for purposes of:				
	Lighting	Cooking	Heating	
	%*	%*	%*	
<u>Rural</u>				
Electricity	3	2	2	
Wood	2	88	81	
Dung	1	32	30	
Coal	1	52	51	
Candles	94	-	-	
Paraffin/petroleum	74	70	48	
Gas	4	6	4	
<u>White farm</u>				
Electricity	10	2	1	
Wood	5	93	83	
Dung	0	37	31	
Coal	0	19	16	
Candles	90	-	-	
Paraffin/petroleum	67	52	33	
Gas	2	2	1	
<u>Township</u>				
Electricity	29	24	19	
Wood	2	38	26	
Dung	0	2	1	
Coal	3	47	38	
Candles	77	-	-	
Paraffin/petroleum	53	71	52	
Gas	8	14	8	
<u>Shacks</u>				
Electricity	1	1	1	
Wood	4	30	28	
Dung	0	1	1	
Coal	0	9	8	
Candles	93	-	-	
Paraffin/petroleum	70	88	75	
Gas	5	7	5	
*Multiple responses				
<u>Access to wood</u>	<u>Rural</u>	<u>White farm</u>	<u>Township</u>	<u>Shacks</u>
(Wood users only)	%	%	%	%
Bought	45	9	74	18
Collected nearby	45	90	2	61
Collected more than				
30 minutes walk away	10	1	24	21
	100	100	100	100
(N)	(297)	(246)	(710)	(39)

Table A continued

HEALTH SERVICES				
	Rural	White	Town-	Shacks
	%	farm	ship	%
	%	%	%	%
Transport to nearest clinic/hospital doctor				
On foot	33	13	37	9
By bicycle	2	0	0	34
By train/bus	61	61	54	38
By private car	3	23	8	15
Other	1	3	1	4
	100	100	100	100
Distance to nearest clinic/hospital/doctor (Time spent in getting there)				
Less than 15 minutes	14	10	19	9
15-29 minutes	28	17	39	34
30-59 minutes	31	36	33	38
1 - 2 hours	24	31	9	15
More than 2 hours	3	6	0	4
	100	100	100	100
Frequency with which patients are seen				
Daily	72	86	93	78
2 - 3 times per week	15	5	5	7
Once a week	6	9	1	6
Less often	7	-	1	9
	100	100	100	100

Table A continued

EDUCATION				
Transport to school (farthest away from residence)	Rural %	White farm %	Town- ship %	Shacks %
On foot	87	85	78	70
By bicycle	1	1	1	3
By bus/train	11	13	20	27
By private car	1	1	1	0
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
(Primary school is farthest away)	(68%)	(80%)*	(54%)*	(68%)*
Distance to school (Time spent in getting to school)				
Less than 15 minutes	31	24	35	21
15-29 minutes	36	31	40	32
30-59 minutes	23	27	22	32
1 - 2 hours	9	10	3	14
More than 2 hours	1	8	0	1
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
Incidence of children of school- going age not attending school	19	30	8	17
Reasons for children not attending school	%*	%*	%*	%*
Poor health	19	9	26	0
Financial constraints	38	51	40	63
Needed to keep house	4	2	2	0
Herds cattle	25	16	2	0
Is seeking employment	0	0	9	0
In wage employment	0	2	0	0
*Multiple responses				

Table A continued

INCOME, MATERIAL STANDARD OF LIVING				
	<u>Rural</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Town-</u>	<u>Shacks</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>farm</u>	<u>ship</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>Rental payments</u>	29	5	90	33
<u>Median monthly rent</u>	R6	R5	R26	R8
<u>Ability to save over past year</u>	23	16	35	20
<u>Hire purchase/debt repayments</u>	26	20	47	23
<u>Consumer durables</u>				
Fridge	11	0	38	9
Electric or gas stove/oven	12	3	31	9
Radio	82	78	85	80
Record/tape player	28	21	38	27
Television	5	3	28	6
Lounge suite or equivalent	74	40	76	65
Bedroom suite or equivalent	92	76	89	89
Vehicle	15	4	21	10
Telephone	1	0	16	1
<u>Estimated median per capita income from all sources per month in Rands</u>				
	25	12	52	45
LABOUR PARTICIPATION				
<u>Percentage households with unemployed persons:</u>				
	<u>Rural</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Town-</u>	<u>Shacks</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>farm</u>	<u>ship</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>Households with</u>				
Unemployed men	21	9	22	20
Unemployed men who have been seeking work 6 months or more	13	8	11	14
Unemployed women	27	12	30	16
Unemployed women who have been seeking work 6 months or more	17	11	14	12

Table A continued

TRANSPORT				
<u>Usual type of transport</u>				
	<u>Rural</u>	<u>White farm</u>	<u>Township</u>	<u>Shacks</u>
	%	%	%	%
Walking	25	49	20	4
Bicycle	2	2	0	-
Public transport	68	45	70	91
Taxis	1	1	4	4
Lifts	0	2	0	-
Private car	4	1	6	1
	100	100	100	100
<u>Workers:</u>				
Hours spent travelling to and from work per day (includes waiting time):				
Over two hours	0%	1%	12%	15%
Median transport costs per week (nearest Rand)	R1	R0	R3	R2
<u>Unemployed:</u>				
Hours spent travelling to seek work per week:				
Over ten hours:	43%	50%	50%	83%
Median transport costs per week: (nearest Rand)	R2	R3	R3	R2
LEISURE AND RECREATION				
	<u>Rural</u>	<u>White farm</u>	<u>Township</u>	<u>Shacks</u>
Median number of hours worked per week	44	54	45	40
Percentage working more than 60 hours per week	5,6	13,8	2,8	6,1
<u>Persons who have been to/on the following in the past month:</u>				
Cinema, theatre, concert, show	15	12	28	14
Public facilities: ie beach, swimming pool, park, museum	10	4	18	21
Hotel, restaurant, bar, or shebeen	14	19	27	51
Shopping trips for non-essentials to town or service centre	35	36	53	38
Live sports events	20	18	31	11
Religious services	81	59	78	79

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